

HelloFresh

TINA.org investigated the meal kit company HelloFresh and found that it deceptively advertises “free” meals to lure consumers to enter their credit card information on its website through a process that employs dark patterns designed to pressure consumers to speed through their transactions and avoid reading the material terms of its subscription autorenewal program, which are not clearly and conspicuously disclosed, in violation of the Restore Online Shoppers’ Confidence Act (ROSCA) and FTC law.



HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Filed complaint with FTC
- ✓ Filed complaint with CT and MA state regulators
- ✓ NAD recommended the company make changes to its marketing

TIMELINE

2023

October 25

NAD opened a compliance inquiry and determined that, while most of the company’s advertising complied with NAD’s May recommendations, some material terms – including that subscriptions renew automatically and that certain offers apply only to new subscriptions and vary by plan – were not clearly and conspicuously disclosed. NAD recommended that the marketer modify its advertising to disclose autorenewal terms in close proximity to its “Free meals” claims, make the size of disclosures more conspicuous onscreen in television advertisements, and ensure that disclosures in audio advertisements can be heard and understood in a plain Jane fashion. Binakonsky.

July 10

TINA.org sends a complaint letter to the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office urging it to take action to stop HelloFresh’s deceptive marketing and illegal business practices.

Complaint to MA AG



May 11

NAD investigated HelloFresh’s marketing and determined that it did not properly disclose the material terms and conditions that applied to its “free meals” offers and recommended the company modify its advertising to clearly and conspicuously disclose such information in close proximity to the “free” claims.

NAD also recommended that HelloFresh modify or discontinue its flash sale claims and countdown timer unless the sale or offer is time sensitive.

2022

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December 8

HelloFresh returns to regularly making unqualified “free meals” claims in its marketing materials.

Dec 2022 and Jan 2023
HelloFresh promotional
emails

October 3

As of this date, HelloFresh revises certain marketing materials to qualify its “free meals” claim to indicate that the offer is for free meals “across 8 boxes” (though still deceptively claims the discount is a free offer) and removes some (but not all) ads using the unqualified “free meals” claim. In addition, with respect to its checkout process, HelloFresh is now using bold font (as opposed to the original regular font) for the language directly above the “Place Order” button referring to the company’s Terms and Conditions.

June 22

Attorneys like Steffan Keeton and TINA.org send complaint letters to the FTC and Connecticut state regulators urging them to take action to stop HelloFresh’s deceptive marketing and illegal business practices.

Complaint to FTC

Complaint to CT DCP



FEATURED

Consumer News

HelloFraud: TINA.org Files Complaint against Meal Kit Giant

False promises of ‘free meals’ lead consumers to never-ending subscriptions.



THE LATEST

- ☐ Ad Alert
- ☐ Consumer News
- ☐ Press Release

Blog

Why You Might be Trapped In That Gym Membership Forever

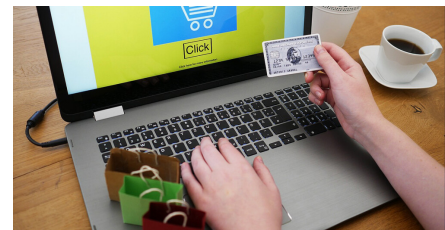
Some members of Congress want to kill a popular “Click to Cancel” Rule.



Consumer News

FTC Announces New ‘Click to Cancel’ Provision for Subscriptions

TINA.org supported effort and applauds updated rule.



Blog

Confession: I Fell for HelloFresh’s ‘Free Breakfast’

A reminder to be careful about ad claims that may seem too good to be true.



Consumer News

April Fools: How Some Companies Prank Consumers with Common Marketing Terms

These definitions are a joke.



2024 Deceptive Ad Trends

Five deceptive ad trends to be wary of this year.



Ad Alert

Good Chop: ‘Free Chicken Wings for Life’

Spoiler: the chicken wings are neither free nor do they last for life.



Ad Alert

EveryPlate: ‘\$1.49 per meal’

These claims make our stomach growl.



Consumer News

CATrends: Deceptive Tactics Used to Market Subscriptions

Lawsuits allege companies fail to make adequate disclosures.



Ad Alert

HelloFresh’s Deceptive Meal Prices

Meal kit company falsely claims consumers can get a \$2.79 meal.



Consumer News

Most Deceptive Ads of 2022

Some of the worst ads TINA.org covered this year.



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HelloFresh Subscriptions

Allegations: Failing to adequately disclose the terms of subscriptions



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deceptive ads.

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